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**The Socio-economic Effects of Depression on Children in a Post-Conflict Area: A Case Study of Aswa County, Gulu District**

Many children fell prey of the 23 years armed conflict in Northern Uganda. Both the government and rebel groups caused adverse harm to the children destroying social facilities and lives. The communities were displaced into the Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camps with appalling conditions for human beings and children suffered significantly. The parents, government and other stakeholders failed to provide adequate protection to the children and because of these multiple sufferings the children in northern Uganda and Gulu have not recovered from the loss. Depression is associated with numerous negative and long lasting psychosocial problems in children, reduced functionality, suicide and even death. Available research and studies show that depression resulting from war and violence may have serious consequences on future adult development of adolescents; coupled with time lost, financial constraints and stress that the parents face with upbringing a depressed child. Unfortunately, these disorders often go unrecognised by families and physicians alike. In this study, the research is focusing on examining the social and economic effects of depression on children in a post-conflict situation. In carrying out of the study, the researcher chose a case study strategy as the most suitable approach for this research to examine the socio-economic effects of depression on children in a post-conflict situation. Both the qualitative and quantitative approaches were used in the study, structured 13 questionnaire, focus group discussion guide and interview guide to enlist information from different respondents. Data analysis was done using EPI DATA. Overall, the study findings show that knowledge about depression is still very scanty with the children not able to identify depression symptoms and not able to know that they are depressed. The worst part of it all is that they do not know they are actually sick and need to seek medical attention. The assessment and analysis of data on the effects of depression on social relations of the children found that majority of the children have poor relationships with their peers, parents and caretakers. Depression affects children's behaviours negatively and this affects children's positive development and may lead to other delinquent behaviours which expose them to more risks and abuse. Depression reduces the energy to engage in productive activities both at school and at home as found out by this study. This can affect their school performance negatively leading to failures in examinations. The researcher concluded that depression affects both the social and economic life of children with serious short term and long term negative consequences both for the child, family, community and consequently affecting their positive development into adult life. Therefore, early identification and treatment is very important in helping the conditions not to become chronic. There should be increased intentional community mobilisation and awareness raising to understand that depression is just like any illness that can be prevented and treated effectively. The government should ensure consistent implementation of the mental health act and health services bill to allow for continuous flow of drugs to health centres and this should be backed by increasing the number of personnel in the mental health department. Parents and adolescents should be aware of the warning signs of depression and suicidal thoughts and report any sign of danger immediately to the health units or professionals

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